

NOTES ON THE NOMENCLATURE OF CERTAIN NORTH AMERICAN FISHES.

By DAVID S. JORDAN and CHARLES H. GILBERT.

1. *Lepidosteus spatula* Lacépède.

We have been enabled to compare the "Alligator Gar" of the Southern United States, with a Cuban "Manjuari" (*L. tristæchus* Bloch & Schneider) in the museum of Cornell University. It is probable that our species is distinct from the latter. The most prominent difference is in the development of the fulera, the number of these on each of the fins being about twice as many in our specimens of *spatula* as in the single example of *tristæchus* examined. The number of scales in a vertical series is rather greater in the former. The number of fulera increases somewhat with age, and it may be that this character will prove worthless. At present, however, it is best to retain the name *spatula* for the species found in the United States.

2. *Ictiobus*.

We find ourselves unable to recognize *Ictiobus*, *Bubalichthys*, and *Carpiodes* as distinct genera; they may be united under the earliest name, *Ictiobus*. An examination of Rafinesque's manuscript note-books, now preserved in the National Museum, shows, beyond a doubt, that the original *Catostomus bubalus* of Rafinesque was identical with the *Catostomus bubalus* of Kirtland, or the *Bubalichthys bubalus* of Agassiz. It is likely that the number of species in the group called *Carpiodes* has been much exaggerated. It is thought by Professor Forbes and Mr. Garman, who have worked over the very extensive material in the Illinois Laboratory of Natural History, that not more than two valid species exist. The same conclusion has been independently reached by Messrs. Swain and Kalb in the study of our own collections. We may, therefore, provisionally recognize the following as the known species of *Ictiobus*:

1. *Ictiobus (Sclerognathus) cyprinella* (C. & V.) Ag. (*Ichthyobus bubalus* Ag. non Raf.).
2. *Ictiobus (Ictiobus) urus* (Ag.) J. & G.
3. *Ictiobus (Ictiobus) bubalus* (Raf.) J. & G.
4. *Ictiobus (Carpiodes) carpio* (Raf.) Nelson.
5. *Ictiobus (Carpiodes) cyprinus* (Le S.) J. & G.

3. *Esox vermiculatus* Le Sueur.

It is evident from Rafinesque's manuscripts and drawings above noticed, that his *Esox rittatus* and *Esox salmoneus* are mythical, being known only from fraudulent drawings. The common small pickerel of the West, for which the name *Esox salmoneus* has been used by us, should stand as *Esox vermiculatus* Le Sueur, this name being prior to *Esox umbrosus* Kirtland.

5. *Scytaliscus* nom. gen. nov.

The name *Scytalina* given by us in 1880 to a genus of Congrogadoid fishes, is perhaps too near *Scytalinus* Erichson 1840, a genus of Coleoptera. We may therefore substitute for it the name *Scytaliscus*. The type is *Scytalina cerdale* J. & G.

NOTES ON THE NATURAL HISTORY OF LABRADOR.

By W. A. STEARNS.

There has been much contention between the two great powers, France and England, as to who first discovered this great peninsula of Labrador. It was certainly visited by Sebastian Cabot in 1496; and more or less explored by the Portuguese Cortereal, who, it is supposed, named it.

The popular tradition of the coast seems to be "that one Labrador, a Basque whaler, from the kingdom of Navarre, in Spain, did penetrate through the Straits of Belle Isle as far as Labrador Bay, some time about the middle of the fifteenth century, and eventually the whole coast took its name from that coast and harbor."

There is very little doubt but that the coast here was visited by Norsemen as early as the tenth century.

There exists strong proof, also, that the discovery of this coast was made known by Basque fishermen.

As early as 1509, a chart of the coast had been published and was in the possession of the French.

In 1532, Jacques Cartier visited the coast *with Basque fishermen for pilots*.

The first established colony in Labrador appears to be that at "Brest," now Bradore, which was founded 1508, and soon contained 200 houses and 1,000 inhabitants, which number was trebled in the summer time or fishing season; but this colony did not survive over a century or a century and a half.

At present, from Red Bay to Natashquan, a distance of over 400 miles, there is scarcely a township containing more than thirty resident families.

The principal seal-fishing establishments are at La Tabatier, Dog Islands, Bradore, Long Point, and L'anse Loup. At these the average catch of eight stations, where hand nets are used, that are about 40 to 75 fathoms long and 30 feet deep is 800 large and 50 to 100 small harp and hood seal. The catch of Newfoundland and other steamers and vessels is 13,000 to 16,000 young "white coats" on the ice in the spring. These figures are increased or diminished according to the season.

I have visited nearly every station of importance from Mingan to Triangle Harbor, some miles north of Belle Isle, and everywhere found the people hard at work at their fishery in the summer time.